

## **REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

The Office Action dated August 1, 2007 has been carefully considered. Claims 1-13 are pending in the present application with claim 1 being in independent form. By the present Amendment, claims 1-13 have been amended to further clarify the features of the present application and to correct minor formal errors.

The Examiner has objected to the Abstract because the Abstract includes the word “comprises”. The Examiner further notes that at line 7 of the Abstract, the term “minimizes” was misspelled. By the present Amendment, the Abstract of the disclosure has been amended to correct the minor errors noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the objection of the Abstract be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner alleges that the specification does not provide enablement for a coupling system having a mechanical protection device independent of the union assembly. In particular, the Examiner objects to the term “independent” used in claim 1 with respect to the protection device. As noted above, claim 1 has been amended herein in order to further clarify the features of the present application. It is believed that claim 1, as amended herein, is properly enabled by the present specification.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 1 under Section 112, first paragraph, be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The remaining claims 2-13 depend either directly or independently from claim 1 and are believed to also be fully supported by the present specification.

Claims 1-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

In particular, the Examiner argues with respect to claim 1 that the limitation “connector or union assembly” in line 2 is confusing and renders the claim indefinite. The Examiner further notes that the recitation of “a conducting or semi-conducting layer” in line 4 is also confusing and renders the claim indefinite. As is noted above, claim 1 has been amended herein in order to

further clarify the features of the present application. It is believed that claim 1, as amended herein, particularly points out and distinctly claims the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-13 under Section 112, second paragraph, be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1-4 and 7-10 have been rejected as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,129,554 to Poth. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner argues that Poth substantially discloses all the features of claim 1 of the present application. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Claim 1, as amended herein, relates to a coupling system between high-voltage electrical equipment including a connector that inserts in female connectors of the high voltage equipment the connector comprising an insulating shell inside which are housed conducting elements, whose external surface is partially covered by a conductive layer and a mechanical protection device connected to the connector and disposed surrounding the conductive layer and in contact with the conductive layer. Poth fails to disclose such a coupling system.

As an initial matter, it is noted that the coupling device of Poth is used to connect medium voltage switches, and thus, is not a coupling system between high voltage electrical equipment, as is required by claim 1, for example, of the present application.

In addition, the coupling device of Poth does not include “a mechanical protection device connected to the connector and disposed surrounding the conductive layer and in contact with said conductive layer,” as is required by amended claim 1, for example, of the present application. The Examiner argues that element DF, in Poth, corresponds to the mechanical protection device of the present application. This is incorrect. Applicants have carefully reviewed the Poth reference and there is no indication therein to suggest that element DF is a mechanical protection device. The spring DF, however, is used to press the pressure sleeves AH1, AH2 against container walls BW1, BW2. The spring DF, however, does not provide any mechanical protection for the connector since the spaces between the rings of the spring would leave substantial room for damage to the coupling device. Further, there is no discussion in Poth that element DF is structured or intended to provide such mechanical protection.

Further, it does not appear that element DF in Poth is in contact with the layer HS of the shell, as is further required by amended claim 1 of the present application. The Examiner argues

that element HS of Poth corresponds to the conductive layer of claim 1. However, as can be seen in Figure 2, for example, in Poth, the spring DF is separated from the layer HS, such that the spring DF does not contact the layer HS.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art for at least the reasons described above.

Claims 5-6 and 11-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Poth in view of German Patent reference no. 1135864 to Fisher. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

As is noted above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is patentable over Poth for at least the reasons described above. Further, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Poth and Fisher, since Poth and Fisher, either alone or in combination, fail to show or suggest the patentable features of claim 1 described above.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, and the claims depending therefrom, including claims 5-6 and 11-13 are patentable over the cited art and are in condition for allowance.

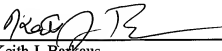
In light of the remarks and amendments made herein, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-13 of the present application are patentable over the cited art and are in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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SYSTEM ON February 1, 2008.

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